

The AFCARS Report

Preliminary Estimates as of April 2001 (5)

How many children were in foster care on March 31, 2000? 588,000

SOURCE: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data submitted for the reporting period 10/1/99 through 3/31/00 (a six-month period).

NOTES: The number of jurisdictions submitting useable foster care data was 49 including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Although the percentage distributions within questions have remained relatively constant since the first report (TAR 1), there is considerable variation in the estimated numbers. This is due in part to improvements in the quality of the data and to the use of different estimation procedures. TAR 1 developed estimates using a combination of data from AFCARS and its predecessor the Voluntary Cooperative Information System (VCIS). Beginning with TAR 3, if a State did not report data for the period or the data reported were not useable, the total number of children in foster care reported most recently either through AFCARS or VCIS was used in computing the national estimate. In addition, in this report (TAR 5) the estimated net (entries - discharges) number of children in foster care on March 31, 2000 expected to be reported in the subsequent reporting period was included in the estimated total. The new race categories which permit multiple race designations have not been included in this report so that the reader can more easily compare the race/ethnic distributions of the foster care children with the adopted children whose data in FY 1999 were reported using the previous race categories. Children identified as multiracial in the foster care data are included in the unknown/unable to determine race/ethnicity category. Some percentages do not add up to 100% and/or the estimated numbers do not add up to the total number in the category due to rounding.

What were the ages of the children in foster care?

Mean Yrs	10.1	
Median Yrs	10.4	
Under 1 Yr	4%	22,303
1 thru 5 Yrs	24%	140,980
6 thru 10 Yrs	25%	149,357
11 thru 15 Yrs	29%	168,114
16 thru 18 Yrs	16%	96,349
19 + Yrs	2%	10,897

What were the placement settings of children in foster care?

Pre-Adoptive Home	4%	23,434
Foster Family Home (Relative)	25%	145,150
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	48%	282,330
Group Home	8%	46,293
Institution	10%	59,689
Supervised Independent Living	1%	4,857
Runaway	2%	9,147
Trial Home Visit	3%	17,100

What were the lengths of stay for the children in foster care?

Mean Months	33	
Median Months	21	
< 1 Month	4%	22,191
1 to 5 Mos	15%	89,312
6 to 11 Mos	16%	92,160
12 to 17 Mos	11%	64,934
18 to 23 Mos	9%	54,862
24 to 29 Mos	7%	43,308
30 to 35 Mos	6%	35,987
3 to 4 Yrs	15%	85,681
5 Yrs or More	17%	99,566

What were the case goals of the children in foster care?

Reunify with Parent(s) or Principal Caretaker(s)	43%	251,332
Live with Other Relative(s)	4%	24,175
Adoption	20%	117,773
Long Term Foster Care	8%	45,362
Emancipation	5%	32,146
Guardianship	3%	15,243
Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	17%	101,968

Children in foster care on March 31, 2000 (continued)

What was the race/ethnicity of the children in foster care?

White Non-Hispanic	35%	207,948
Black Non-Hispanic	38%	226,363
Hispanic	15%	88,939
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	2%	9,330
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	1%	6,213
UnKnown/Unable to Determine	8%	49,207

What was the gender of the children in foster care?

Male	52%	308,066
Female	48%	279,934

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

How many children entered foster care during the period 10/1/99 through 3/31/00? 146,000

What were the ages of the children who entered care during this six-month period?

Mean Yrs	8.8	
Median Yrs	9.0	
Under 1 Yr	13%	18,795
1 thru 5 Yrs	24%	34,903
6 thru 10 Yrs	22%	31,935
11 thru 15 Yrs	30%	43,364
16 thru 18 Yrs	12%	16,839
19+ Yrs	0%	163

What was the race/ethnicity of the children who entered care during this six-month period?

White Non-Hispanic	42%	61,927
Black Non-Hispanic	29%	42,826
Hispanic	13%	19,306
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	2%	2,911
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	2%	2,310
UnKnown/Unable to Determine	11%	16,720

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

How many children exited foster care during the period 10/1/99 through 3/31/00? 124,000

What were the ages of the children who exited care during this six-month period?

Mean Yrs	10.1	
Median Yrs	10.1	
Under 1 Yr	4%	5,229
1 thru 5 Yrs	26%	32,299
6 thru 10 Yrs	23%	29,097
11 thru 15 Yrs	25%	30,489
16 thru 18 Yrs	20%	24,414
19 + Yrs	2%	2,472

What was the race/ethnicity of the children who exited care during this six-month period?

White Non-Hispanic	45%	55,961
Black Non-Hispanic	33%	40,665
Hispanic	13%	16,731
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	2%	2,740
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	2%	2,002
UnKnown/Unable to Determine	5%	5,902

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Children who exited foster care (continued)

What were the lengths of stay of the children who exited foster care during the period 10/1/99 through 3/31/00?

Mean Months	20.6	
Median Months	10.2	
< 1 Month	21%	25,622
1 to 5 Mos	19%	23,527
6 to 11 Mos	14%	17,938
12 to 17 Mos	10%	12,733
18 to 23 Mos	7%	9,275
24 to 29 Mos	6%	6,846
30 to 35 Mos	4%	5,338
3 to 4 Yrs	10%	11,902
5 Yrs or More	9%	10,819

What were the outcomes for the children exiting foster care during the period 10/1/99 through 3/31/00?

Reunification with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)	60%	74,758
Living with Other Relative(s)	11%	13,074
Adoption	15%	18,457
Emancipation	6%	7,859
Guardianship	3%	3,391
Transfer to Another Agency	3%	3,599
Runaway	2%	2,595
Death of Child	0%	268

NOTE: Deaths are attributable to a variety of causes including medical conditions, accidents and homicide.

How many children were waiting to be adopted on March 31, 2000? 134,000

NOTES: Waiting children are identified as children who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parental rights have been terminated. Children 16 years old and older whose parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation have been excluded from the estimate.

What is the gender distribution of the waiting children?

Male	52%	61,734
Female	48%	56,266

What is the racial/ethnic distribution of the waiting children?

White Non-Hispanic	32%	37,306
Black Non-Hispanic	45%	53,240
Hispanic	12%	14,438
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	1%	1,337
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	1%	917
UnKnown/Unable to Determine	9%	10,763

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

How old were the waiting children when they were removed from their parents or caretakers?

Mean Yrs	4.4	
Median Yrs	3.6	
Less than 1	27%	36,484
1-5	40%	53,739
6-10	25%	33,931
11-15	7%	9,519
16-18	0%	327

How old were the waiting children on March 31, 2000?

Mean Yrs	8.1	
Median Yrs	8.0	
Less than 1	2%	3,084
1-5	33%	44,648
6-10	36%	47,785
11-15	25%	33,654
16-18	4%	4,829

Children waiting to be adopted on March 31, 2000 (continued)

How many months have the waiting children been in continuous foster care?

Mean Months	45	
Median Months	36	
Less than 1 month	1%	791
1 through 5 months	3%	4,333
6 through 11 months	7%	8,982
12 through 17 months	9%	11,648
18 through 23 months	11%	14,645
24 through 29 months	10%	13,676
30 through 35 months	10%	12,805
36 through 59 months	25%	33,639
60 or more months	25%	33,482

Where were the waiting children living on March 31, 2000?

Pre-Adoptive Home	15%	19,687
Foster Family Home (Relative)	18%	24,487
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	58%	78,150
Group Home	3%	3,895
Institution	5%	6,865
Supervised Independent Living	0%	78
Runaway	0%	457
Trial Home Visit	0%	381

How many children in foster care had their parental rights terminated for all living parents? 64,000

As of March 31, 2000, how many months had elapsed since the parental rights of these foster children were terminated?

Mean Months	22
Median Months	14

How many children were adopted from the public foster care system in FY 1999? 46,000

SOURCE: Adoptions finalized in federal fiscal year 1999 reported to AFCARS by May 15, 1999.

NOTES: The number of jurisdictions reporting useable data was 52 including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The federal fiscal year runs from October 1, 1998 through September 30, 1999. Total numbers for FY 2000 are not yet available. Some percentages do not add up to 100% and/or the estimated numbers do not add up to the total number in the category due to rounding.

What is the gender distribution of the children adopted from the public foster care system?

Male	50%	22,961
Female	50%	23,039

What is the racial/ethnic distribution of the children adopted from the public foster care system?

White Non-Hispanic	39%	18,152
Black Non-Hispanic	43%	19,979
Hispanic	15%	6,734
Asian/PI Non-Hispanic	1%	496
AI/AN Non-Hispanic	1%	639

NOTE: Using U.S. Bureau of the Census standards, children of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Children adopted in FY 1999 (continued)

How old were the children when they were adopted from the public foster care system?

Mean Yrs	6.9	
Median Yrs	6.4	
Under 1	2%	835
1-5	45%	20,758
6-10	36%	16,467
11-15	15%	6,999
16-18	2%	896
19+	0%	44

How many months did it take after termination of parental rights for the children to be adopted?

Mean Months	16	
Median Months	12	
<1 mos	3%	1,503
1-5 mos	18%	8,453
6-11 mos	30%	13,849
12-17 mos	19%	8,773
18-23 mos	11%	5,062
24-29 mos	6%	2,906
30-35 mos	4%	1,733
3-4 yrs	6%	2,737
5+ yrs	2%	984

What proportion of the children adopted are receiving an adoption subsidy?

Yes	88%	40,370
No	12%	5,630

What was the relationship of the adoptive parents to the child prior to the adoption?

Non-relative	20%	9,148
Foster parent	64%	29,389
Step-parent	0%	90
Other relative	16%	7,372

NOTE: Relatives who were also foster parents were counted as relatives.

Adoptive Family Structure

Married Couple	66%	30,224
Unmarried Couple	1%	397
Single Female	31%	14,419
Single Male	2%	960